MARVEL
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WELLS
O'HARE
FAUCHER

PETER PARKER™ SPIDER-MAN®

THE RULES OF THE GAME PART 2

At a demonstration on Radiation, high school student Peter Parker was bitten by an Irradiated Spider from which he gained the Arachnid's Incredible Abilities. When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his Great Powers in the service of his fellow man, because he learned an invaluable lesson: With Great Power There Must Also Come Great Responsibility.

PETER PARKER™ SPIDER-MAN®

Rules of the Game

Peter Parker
SPIDER-MAN

Donald Hart

Buck Masterson

Gary Wisen

Edwin Hills

PREVIOUSLY

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After realizing that his battles with his rogues' gallery have become more petty and arbitrary over the years, Peter is forced to ponder his place in the world. Is he truly helping people by engaging in battle after battle with the same villains? Has this life-or-death struggle become nothing more than a game? Seeming to accentuate this philosophical conflict, his old enemy, Boomerang, without reason or warning attacks Spider-Man. Spidey's only clue comes after he has defeated the Aussie villain, when he finds small cameras recording his every move.

Little does he know that four captains of industry: Donald Hart, a high-powered CEO; Edwin Hills, a software billlionaire; Buck Masterson, an oil baron; and Gary Wisen, a Hollywood executive, have also noticed the random and sometimes senseless cycle of violence that New York's super heroes seem to propagate. Whereas some see this as an epidemic, these four see it as an opportunity for profit. Perhaps, if they can find a market, money can be made from the exhibition of such battles. Unfortunately for Spidey, he's been chosen as the perfect guinea pig for what may prove to be the 21st Century's greatest show on earth.

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"Look at him. Staring, confused. Is it starting to weigh on him? That this pointless battle had a secret meaning...

"Can he feel the flow of money made on his back? The common man, finally allowed into his world. Allowed to watch.

"Allowed to... participate."

But even this is secondary to our true accomplishment. We were part of it, you see...

We made the rules. ***We*** set the boundaries. For a moment ***we*** were in control of the most exclusive game in town. Us...

An oilman from Texas...

A Hollywood player...

A software giant...

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

PART II

RULES OF THE GAME

BOYS AND THEIR TOYS

WRITTEN BY ZEB WELLS • PENCILED BY MICHAEL O'HARE
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Wasn't it... intoxicating!

Are you a big drinker, Mr. Parker?

Never touch the stuff. Why do you ask?

Can't believe I manage that question with a straight face.

FOOT BALL FRIDAY NIGHT

Mr. Parker, I have trouble believing these cuts and bruises you parade around aren't the work of that fair-weather friend, *grain alcohol.*

That's not it, Mister Weathers, it's just...

Yes? What is it, Peter? Are you in some sort of underground "Fight Club"?

Um...

Are you looking for members? I'm actually quite strong...

This is getting weird. I am Jack's social anxiety.

WINTER FORMAL

Look, Mr. Weathers, about my face...

Yes...

Well, this is kind of embarrassing. Have you ever put a metal pot in the microwave?

No, I can't say that I have.

Don't, Mr. Weathers.

For the love of all that is good in this world...

...just *don't.* Learn from me.

O-Okay, Mr. Parker. Thank you, I will. Just do try to be more careful.

Count on it.

And now, just to really sell it...

Watch--!

WHAP!

GAH!

EXIT

Poor guy's just trying to help, but I've got a lot on my mind right now. Specifically, trying to sort out who was filming my battle with Boomerang, and why...

What happened to--

Microwave exploded.

I mean, sorry, whoever you are, but I've got a good thing going filming ***myself*** in action, and I'd like to keep that a monopoly, if you don't mind.

Oh, not again! This kid gets in more fights than... well, ***me.***

Watch where you're going, you little oompa loompa!

S-sorry, Louis!

Hey! Break it up.

What's going on here, Louis? You run out of post-pubescents to pick on?

Aw, man. ***He*** started it.

Uh-huh. Look, Louis, I'm going to give you some advice while I fill this out...

Can't wait.

Never fight someone who's weaker than you are without a really good reason. It's just not worth it.

Not worth it? Man, that's just what people say when they get their butts kicked to make themselves feel better.

Is that why your face is so torn up? The other guy wasn't worth it?

Please, Louis. I ***won*** this fight.

Heh.

Donny, baby. I'll admit you've proven that these battles can be lucrative with a niche market-- namely Mafia thugs-- but I have to remind you that my studio is only interested in *legal* entertainment.

Y-yeah, Donald. I've got enough on my mind with Uncle Sam splitting my company. I don't know if I want to get mixed up with the mob...

Cowardice from the elite. Such a sad sight. Laws are for the bourgeois, gentlemen. Would any of you be where you are without recognizing this fact?

Never mind. Your fear-laden drivel has made me hungry for proof of your resolve.

Gary, perhaps you'd like to produce your contribution to our endeavor.

My boy is our "secret weapon," Donny baby. Let's not be anticlimactic.

Very well, Edwin?

O-of course. You see, I'm always thinking. Always looking at things from a business perspective.

I thought, why procure the services of some super-powered sociopath when I have the perfect opportunity to field-test my latest product?

So without further ado, I present to you the latest in robotics technology. Set for product launch the summer of 2005. The ***bodyguard*** slash ***pet*** of the future...

The XP-2000!!

I h-hate robots.

Y'hear me, Buckethead? What do you think you're lookin' at?

HEAD AND SHOULDER AREA OF OVERWEIGHT CAUCASIAN MALE. SEARCHING FOR NECK...

SEARCHING...

You see, he is quite advanced. Isn't that right, XP?

YES, MASTER.

"Master?"

Er...

Well, thank you, Edwin. This should be enough to get my legs broken. You think a bunch of wise guys want to watch a second rate robot mindlessly paw at our hero?

A robot... how boring.

He can hear you, you know.

NECK NOT FOUND...

Oh, shut your trapper.

Maybe Buck would like to send his player in as well, leaving my acquisition as a solo finale?

Will your man deliver?

More than you know, old friend.

More than any of you know...

Hmm, very well. I suppose a double feature ***would*** have a certain ***appeal.*** Buck, what have you got for us?

Okay, so what do you guys think of when you think of ol' Buck? That's right, my home state of Texas! And nothing says Texas like a big ol' honkin'...

SCORPION!!!

GARRRR!!

Impressive, Buck. A name villain. Nice energy. What is he capable of, exactly?

How 'bout a demo, Mac?

Grrr, how 'bout I kill the little one?

Uh... er--

No, no you can't *kill* the "little one."

Then you'll just have to read my brochure!

You have a brochure?

I've been learning Photoshop--

RING!

Wha--

Heh, thanks for grabbin' that, Mac. Y'see, that's a Texas boy for you. Go ***big*** or go ***home,*** ain't that right, Mac?

I'm from ***Queens,*** Buck.

=Gnarl Gnarl=

Donald, it's your mother. What's going on?

...well okay then.

This is all coming together, gentlemen. Now we only need find to a ***hero,*** which in this city shouldn't be too--

Spider-Man!

I'm here to kill Spider-Man!

But we already used him; it's a little early for a sequel, isn't it?

...No, our friend might be right. Spider-Man has no group affiliation. No arrangement with the law. He is the perfect guinea pig. Our audience-- criminals, of course-- love to watch him. All in the hope that he'll be exterminated. He makes great sport.

Money in the bank.

XP 2000

Hey!!!

What the hell is this?

Uh, well, old fella, that's your partner. If that doesn't rub you the wrong way?

I've worked with worse.

MY SIMPLEST WEAPON, MY METAL CLAWS, CAN EXERT OVER--

So. What kind of powers you got, anyway?

Yeah, well you should see my tail in action. Beats your claws for sure, so don't go thinking you're in charge, got it? You know I can whip things with it, right? You ever been cracked with a whip? Imagine that times about twenty.

IMAGINE?

Yep, you'll get to see me in action. I'm gonna whip that Spider-Man good. You gotta watch him, though, he's smart.

This one time, I had just lost it 'cause I couldn't get my costume off. So Spider-Man shows up and after we do our little dance, bang! He gets me right out of it.

Wait! Did that sound weird!?

Are you recording this?! You erase that last part, you hear me?! And don't go telling all your buddies that there's somethin' weird going on with me and Spider-Man, got it?!

Now what was I talking about?

SCORPION ONLY TALKS ABOUT SCORPION.

That's right, thanks for reminding me. Now did I tell you I'm--

Scorpion, come in, Scorpion.

"We have a visual."

No, looks like I'm not gonna make it for dinner, May. I'm out doing some detective work and nothing's coming up...

No, May. It's nothing like it is on "Magnum P.I."

Well Magnum didn't have a spider-sense, did--

--he...

TARGET ACQUIRED.

Spider-Man!!

Let's do violence on each other.

CRASH!

Yikes! Let's restructure that sentence!

LAUNCHING EXPLOSIVES.

XP 200

Thanks for the warning, Twiggy.

And congrats on losing the stutter!

As for you, Scorpy, old friend.

I'm glad you stopped by.

Because the phone call...

...was for you!!

HAAK!!

Now I know why Scorpion would want to fight me...

Come on, folks! Two against one, place your bets and get your drinks!

I got a large on Scorpion and the watchamacallit!

...but what did I do to the Tin Man here?

PREPARE TO ACTIVATE ELECTRO-ARM.

3...

2...

Well... *hmm*... I don't like the sound of that.

1...

GARRRRGH!

Dum de dum...

What the $#$# was that?!?

You don't ***tell*** someone what you're about to do to them, you freaking idiot!

Okay then, mum's the word! Thanks for the tip!

So... angry...

Can't... think...

GAAAAAAAARR!!!

Now, come on! I can't riff off you if you're just going to make guttural *sounds!*

Your mouth! *Shut your mouth!!*

Hnnn... or what, big guy?

Open wide!

=urk=

SHHH!

What the--

Stupid, Parker! Forgot about the acid tail!

BA-

ARRR!

Hey, XP!! You waitin' for me to tag you in?!

Have about half a second before this eats through my shirt...

PREPARE TO CRUSH SUBJECT IN METAL CLAWS...

No come on, buddy, why would you want to crush me with your claws?

QUERY NOTED...

GENERATING ANSWER...

SUBJECT: SPIDER-MAN HAS NO GROUP AFFILIATION. NO ARRANGEMENT WITH THE LAW. YOU ARE THE PERFECT GUINEA PIG. THE AUDIENCE-- CRIMINALS, OF COURSE-- LOVE TO WATCH YOU. ALL IN THE HOPE THAT YOU'LL BE EXTERMINATED. YOU MAKE GREAT SPORT. MONEY IN THE BANK.

Uh... thanks.

Chatty robot you've got there.

I-I told you he could hear us.

Scorpion, there's been a slight change of plans. We're gonna need you to shut that little guy up, pronto.

Edwin says there's a switch--

What's that?! I'm sorry you're breaking up!

IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS FEEL FREE TO CONTACT EDWIN--

SQUAAA!

Noooooo!!

Well there, now he can look for his own neck.

That tail is so unpredictable... so violent. Gotta out *think* him...

Shouldn't be too hard...

Oh, look at me! I'll need to wash myself off with something!

Got some blood I can borrow?!?

=Hurk=

CRACK!!

Fortunately his tail isn't as effective at close range...

Unfortunately the rest of him is.

Hey, get up! I need to try that again! I always forget to aim for the nose with my head butts.

THWIP!

You and your stupid little webs!!

Hmmph.

FWAPP!

THWIP!

FWAPP!

Looks like we may have an upset here, gentlemen.

Harr!

Time to die, little man!

J-just don't finish me off with the tail...

Please...

SNAP!

What was...

Whose leg is...

Oh.

Well, ***that's*** a definitive victory if I've ever seen one.

Ahhhh! It hurts!!

Oh, come on. You just dislocated your hip. And probably broke your leg. And I'm pretty sure I heard some tendons go there... okay, so yeah, you're probably in a lot of pain.

But you did it to ***yourself.***

I'm gonna kill you for this!!

So I take it you're not going to tell me who put that camera on your head?

Eat--

Okay, okay. Maybe chatty Cathy here still has something to tell me.

But first things first...

Can't leave you to the boys in blue sporting that tail...

What?! What are you doing?! You stay away from me with that thing!!

URRECECE!

We are on scene, repeat we are on scene!!

NYPD

What the--?

NYPD

Don't look at me!

D-don't look at me without my tail...

ATTACK

Here's to another successful show, gentlemen. I wonder if Spider-Man will ever know what a star we've made of him.

That shouldn't have happened. That shouldn't have happened to XP.

Now come on, little buddy, my guy went and almost ripped his own leg off! But that's what I get for not finding a ***real*** Texan, eh?

Don't touch me.

Losing XP was hard, I guess, but ultimately necessary. Had he been found he might have led someone--

Uh, Donny... baby...

--and there! We've got power to your head, at least.

So, is anyone in there?

XP!

He's alive.

This ain't good.

Let's see if we can't get you talkin' again, eh?

No it ain't.

Gary, I'm afraid we'll need your secret weapon sooner rather than later. We might have to squash our new star before he finds out too much...

Done. Buckle your seatbelts, gentlemen.

The show-stopper has arrived.

Dear lord, Gary... what have you done?

To Be Continued..